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NOAA ANNOUNCES PUBLIC HEARING OF MILLENNIUM PIPELINE APPEAL

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), an agency of the Department of Commerce, announced today that a public hearing will be held for an administrative appeal brought by the Millennium Pipeline Company. The appeal involves Millennium's proposed natural gas pipeline that would run much of the length of New York state, beginning in the Lake Erie region and crossing the Hudson River north of New York City.

The appeal, brought under the Coastal Zone Management Act, results from the state of New York's objection to the project which stemmed from concerns about the project's potential effects on the state's coastal resources. A public hearing on the appeal will be held in Tarrytown, N.Y. on Wednesday, November 13.

Under the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), the state of New York's objection prevents federal agencies from issuing permits required by the project. However, the state's objection may be overridden by the secretary of commerce through an administrative appeal. Millennium filed an appeal of the state of New York's objection with the secretary on June 7.

"The Coastal Zone Management Act is in place to ensure a balance between ecological protection and the economic development of our coastal resources," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "NOAA is committed to our mission of managing and conserving our coastal resources."

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To facilitate the public's access to appeal documents, NOAA recently launched a web site at <http://www.ogc.doc.gov/czma.htm>. This site is designed to make available documents filed in the Millennium appeal as well as background information on the appeal process and links to related sites.

"This new Web site, which we are enhancing with additional information, will help answer many questions the public may have concerning the appeal" said General Counsel of NOAA James R. Walpole. "Through the Web site we hope to improve the public's understanding of the Coastal Zone Management Act and the role of the secretary of commerce in this process." Additional details concerning scheduling and other aspects of the public hearing are expected to be available at the Web site later this month.

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events. NOAA provides environmental leadership of our nation's coastal and marine resources. For more information about NOAA please visit <http://www.noaa.gov>.